



COSTAGUANA

INCLUDING THE INESTIMABLE EFGIART,
AND ALL MANNER OF OTHER RUBBISH.

Volume 10, Number 10

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V
28th September 1985

Buona sera. This is COSTAGUANA, a journal of postal Diplomacy and pixillated putridity, shoved through one end of a copy machine and torn from the other end by Conrad von Metzke, 4374 Donald Avenue, San Diego, CA 92117-3813. 'Phones: Home, (619) 276-2937. Work, (619) 273-4830 or 273-1208. NOTE THAT THE WORK NUMBERS HAVE CHANGED! Use the office only as a last resort, please.

Subscriptions 22c per copy, sold in units of ten. Trades: Gladly. Game fees: \$7 to new recipients, \$3 to current ones; these fees include sub through the end of your game.

A PROPOSAL OR TWO: I am not happy with my fee structure, and am thinking of changing it. Two ideas have occurred to me, and I'd be interested in reader comments. Note, please, that even if I do announce a change, it will not affect current readers for some time to come.

IDEA #1. Eliminate all game fees. All recipients would be required to subscribe, at the current rate of 22c per copy. If I decide to trade, or give you a free sub for whatever reason, that's my business (and monetary loss). Any recipient would be entitled to play in any game opening at any time, provided only that they maintained their subscription.

IDEA #2. Game fees would be assessed on the basis of country played, in terms of its win rate in the rating systems. To operate this system, I would first determine the base total game fee for the game, then compute the percentage of that total due from each player based on the success ratio of the assigned country. Example: If I decide that the total fee will be \$30, and if England is shown in the ratings to have won 25% of all games played, then the English player would be charged a fee of \$7.50; if France has won 20%, the fee is \$6; etc.

I am utterly fascinated with the ramifications of System #2, but if I were changing horses tomorrow, I'd go with #1. That's because it more accurately assesses my actual costs. Not that that much matters; after all, moneys received for this publication all get donated to hobby service people anyway.

Oh, and one more codicil: No matter what happens, players in orphan games which I decide to adopt are exempted from all fees in any case.

Comments?

PUBLIC THANKS: I touched on it last time, but I want to be more emphatic. I owe Rod Walker a sincere debt of gratitude for his efforts in resolving our little dispute. He put some energy and time into it, and I appreciate it very much. At least one person has asked for Rod's address: 1273 Crest Drive, Encinitas, CA 92024.

I'M A PLAYER AGAIN: I've been running games again for many moons, but haven't actually played one in several years. Now, that's all changed. I've just entered a game in Lu Henry's TACKY (as Austria!), and plan to be eliminated do rather nicely. I'll keep you posted.



Reagan's plan for: A. Budget deficits. B. Trade deficits.
C. Arms control. D. All of the above.

THE GAMES

1985AJ - THE TERGIVERSATORY TAPIR - Winter 1903

AUSTRIA (Walters): Has: a's bul, gre, vie, bud, tri (5 - 1 short).

ENGLAND (Fleming): Builds f edi, f lon. Has: a mun; f's edi, lon, den, wes (5).

FRANCE (Walker): Builds f bre. Has: a's bur, bel, mar; f's bre, pic,
spa sc (6).

GERMANY (Caruso): Removes a hol, a ber. Has: a's sil, pru; f kie (3).

ITALY (Pustilnik): Has: a's ven, tyo; f's adr, ion (4).

RUSSIA (Brown): Builds a war, f stp nc. Has: a's con, gal, ank, lvn, nwy, war; f's stp nc, bla, smy, bal (10).

Spring 1904 moves (on file for Austria, England and Germany) are due Saturday, October 19, 1985.

CANNES, At The Film Festival: "Central air isn't such a bad thing; after all, you know what the man said...." - Orson Welles as Harry Slime in 'The Invasion of the Blue Furnace Creatures.'

JAMUL, At The Phlegm Festival: "My God!," gasped the police sergeant, "What is that long, slender blue thing coming out of the grate? It's moving so fast!" "Of course it's fast," said Slime with his usual nonchalance, "It is, after all, a fleet...."

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1983AC - THE WISTFUL WOMBAT - Winter 1909/Spring 1910

The adjustments were: AUS: Remove a vie. ENG: Build a lon.
TUR: Build a ank. a con. f smy.

Jake Walters was on a short vacation, which is why he didn't respond for the postcard bit. No problem: I notified everyone else of the Austrian and English changes, but I just didn't tell Jake....

AUSTRIA (Rauterberg): a tus-ven. a ven-rom.

ENGLAND (Pustilnik): a stp (h). a bur-mar. a ruh-bur. a mun-sil.
a wal-pic. a bre-par. a lon-hol. f mid-por. f eng (c) wal-pic.
f bat-bal. f bal (c) wal-pic. f rot-mid. f nth (c) lon-bal.

FRANCE (Henry): a par-gas. f wes (s) lyo-tyn. f lyo-tyn. f naf-tun.
TURKEY (Waltang): a tri-wie. a war (s) rum-cal. a bud (s) tri-wie.

TURKEI (Walters): a tri-vie. a war (s) rum-gal. a bud (s) tri-vie.
a mos (h). a rum-gal. a ser-tri. a ank-smy. a con-sev. f smy-
eas. f aeg-ion. f tyn-rom. f bla (c) con-sev. f tun (s) ion-
tyn. f ion-tyn.

The Turkish fleet may retreat to Naples or back into the box; Fall moves may be conditional.

I have a proposal to declare the game at an end, as a draw between Turkey and England. As usual with such votes in this journal, a 'no' vote from any player will kill the proposal; votes not cast are considered to be 'yes.' So if you want to veto it, you better write it.

Fall 1910 moves (w/retreat & votes) due Saturday, October 19, 1985.

1983HK - THE AMBIDEXTROUS AARDVARK - Fall 1908

The game will go on. At least one player (maybe more, I'm not telling) has said that no negotiated settlement is acceptable at this time. So I would think that, at a minimum, we can dispense with any more votes until at least after the end of, say, 1909?

ENGLAND (R.Anderson): a wal-lon. a bre-pic. f nat-mid. f lvp-iri.
f nth-eng. f hel (s) RUS kie-hol. f bel-pic.

FRANCE (Rauterberg): f eng-bel.

GERMANY (Keller): a ber (s) hol-kie. f hol-kie.

ITALY (D. Anderson): a gre-ser. a pic (s) FRE eng-bel. a bud-vie.

a gal-war. a ser-tri. a ven-pie. a rom-ven. f nap-ion. f alb
(s) ion-gre. f por-mid. f mid-eng. f tyn-lvo. f ion-gre.

RUSSIA (Egli): a bur-mar. a war-gal. a two-vie. a sil-ber. f kie-hol.

TURKEY (Touchette): a rum (s) bul. a bul (s) rum. a con (s) bul. f eas

(s) aeg. f bla (s) rum. f aeg (s) bul.

The German fleet Holland is grunched; no retreats.

CENTRES;

E: 9: lon, lvp, edi, nwy, swe, den, bel, bre, par. Build two.

F: O: OUT,

G: 1: ber. Even.

I: 11: rom. nap. ven. tun. tri. vie. bud. ser. gre. por. spa. Remove two.

R: 7: stp. mos. war. kie. mun. hol. mar. Build two.

T: 6: con. smy. ank. sev. bul. rum. Even.

Winter 1908 adjustments are due Saturday, October 19, 1985. And a kudo to Paul for staying with a not-too-cheerful position honorably.

MOSCOW: The Czar announces that summer vacations will be on the French Riviera, now that we no longer hold the Black Sea.

JAMUL: Awww---but it looks promising to change that back.

WE ROTATE EVERYDAY

1984HI - THE EXTROVERTED EMU - Fall 1905

Surprise! The Turkish retreat was to Moscow....

AUSTRIA (Pierce): a arm (s) sev. a ser (s) bul-rum. a con (h). a vie-tri. a tri-apu. a sev (s) bul-rum. a bul-rum. f tri (c) tri-apu. f gre-ion.

ENGLAND: f's iri. vor. nwg (h).

FRANCE (Fleming): a ven (s) pie-tyo. a pie-tyo. a lon wishes the Titanic well on its maiden voyage. f lyo-tyn. f mid-naf. f ion-eas. f tyn-ion. f eng-wal.

GERMANY (Walker): a ruh-bel. a sil-gal. a war-mos. a pru-lvn. a mun-boh. f hol-nth. f nth-nwy. f edi (h). f nwv-stn nc.

ITALY: f nnp (h).

TURKEY (Sherwood): a mos-sey a rum (s) mos-sey f bla (s) mos-sey

The Turkish army Rumania may retreat to Ukraina, Budapest or off into the ether; adjustments may be conditional on this.

CENTRES:

A: 11: vie, bud, tri, ser, gre, bul, rum, con, smy, ank, sev. Build two.
 E: 1: lvp. Remove two.
 F: 9: par, bre, mar, spa, por, tun, ven, rom, lon. Build one.
 G: 11: ber, kie, mun, war, stp, swe, nwy, den, hol, bel, edi. Build two.
 I: 1: nap. Even.
 T: 1: mos. Remove two.

The retreat and adjustments are due Saturday, October 19, 1985.

There are two proposals to end this game by vote: One to declare England, Italy and Turkey the 'winners;' the other, somewhat more serious, to declare a draw between France and Germany. Don't bother with the silly one, I wouldn't permit it anyway (I can't see allowing powers in civil disorder to share in the victory); but on the other, votes due next time. One 'no' kills it; but PLEASE NOTE, a vote not cast counts as 'yes.' So watch it.

PARIS: Admiral Villeneuve (great-grandson of the victor of Trafalgar) is happy to announce that Cyprus has been captured. The Admiral was only disappointed by the fact that the Austrians had depleted the supply of Budweiser.

JAMUL: Well, there was this epidemic, and they were short of sheep-dip....

NAVAL MINISTRY: Admiral G.G. Villeneuve has been reassigned to the San San Franciscan front, where he can stride some hills.

JAMUL: What happened, did all the Budweiser dissolve the ones on Cyprus?

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Game 1983CA - THE OLFACTORY OKAPI - Fall 1909 (at last!)

First of all: Thank you all for your patience, and for staying with us even if you may not have agreed with Rod's decision.

The Austrian retreat was to Silesia.

AUSTRIA (Walker): a con-smy. a bud (s) ITA tri-vie. f bul sc (h).
a sil (s) FRE bur-mun.

FRANCE (Bakken): a bel-hol. a bur-ruh. a pic (s) mar-bur. a mar-bur.
a wal-lvp. f hel (s) bel-hol. f lon-nth. f eng-bel. f mid (h).

GERMANY (Menders): a ruh-bur. a mun (s) ruh-bur. a hol-bel. f nat-lvp.

ITALY (Caruso): a tri (s) alb-ser. a alb-ser. a ven (s) tri. f adr-ion. f gre (s) aeg-bul. f ank-arm. f aeg-bul sc.

RUSSIA (Gorham): a ser-bud. a rum (s) ser-bud. a ukr (s) gal. a gal (s) ser-bud. a den (h). a nwy (h). a arm-smy. a war-sil. a sev (s) rum. f ska-nth.

The Austrian fleet Bulgaria is squished. The Austrian army Budapest may retreat to Vienna or nowhere. The German army Holland can flee to Kiel or the wastebasket. Adjustments in winter may be conditional on these.

CENTRES:

A: 3: vie, smy, con. Even.
F: 10: par, bre, mar, spa, por, lon, lvp, edi, bel, hol. Build one.
G: 3: ber, kie, mun. Remove one.
I: 9: ven, rom, nap, tun, tri, ser, gre, bul, ank. Build two.
R: 9: mos, war, stp, sev, rum, bud, nwy, swe, den. Remove one.

Retreats and adjustments must arrive by Saturday, October 19, 1985.

If any press was submitted for this game, I regret to advise that my dog ate it. This implies that there was no press, inasmuch as I do not have a dog.

RECENT ACTIVITIES by your Editor have included: Resumption of a friendship with Rod Walker; development of a new friendship with Keith Sherwood; and resumption of a friendship with Larry Peery.

This means in essence that I hadn't seen Rod much lately, and hadn't seen Larry at all for a long while, and had never met Keith at all, until a short while ago. These deplorable situations have now changed, and will hopefully stay changed.

Rod Walker, whose current involvement with the hobby is in one of its 'low ebb' stages, is outdone only by my mother as the person on this earth whom I've known the longest. We met in 1961; we played Diplomacy (and 'invented' postal play) together; and we lost touch. And then, following an accidental re-meeting in late 1965, we became fast friends, and haven't stopped since. Rod and I have taken turns over the years going in and out of the hobby; it somehow seems that we are rarely active simultaneously, and when he bails out, I take up the slack, and vice-versa. Just now I'm back to involvement and he's leaving again.

For those who have never met Rod, I can only describe him as I did twenty-four years ago: He looks like a well-fed gopher.

Then there's Junior. Keith Sherwood is young enough to be my son, but - owing either to his unusual maturity or my refusal to grow up - manages to communicate as a peer. Though he suffers from a potentially fatal illness (a liking for rock music), and appears mentally jumbled via too close an association with a Walkman, he does possess a certain charm. Perhaps I admire his youthful enthusiasm (hustling chicks), or his clean-cut, Ivy League appearance (Bill Buckley would be proud), but I have a suspicion that his intellect may play a part.

Rod claims that Keith looks like John Denver. I wouldn't know.
I've never met an omelette named John.

Larry Peery has put on weight since last we met. I remember him as being about midway between a spear of asparagus and a watermelon; he has yet to achieve the latter status, but it is fair to say that asparagus is no longer relevant.

For as long as I can remember, Larry has been involved in 'projects.' Some are hobby-related; others are not. Regardless, if Larry fastens onto something, you can believe that it will be dealt with voluminously. He writes precisely the way he talks: Rapidly, expansively, and grippingly.

The uninitiated may at first wonder, "Does this character never shut up?" But very quickly one realizes what is really going on: Larry may be talking, but he is also always listening; and, he never says nothing. The constant chatter of some prattlers may be vapid. Not with Larry. Listen for a minute; you'll quickly realize that he doesn't talk too much at all. He's just a bright, effusive gentleman who has a whale of a lot to verbalize, and does it well.

He's also a nice host, and with luck, a friend capable of forgiving certain social indiscretions.

TO THOSE WHO ACTUALLY WORK FOR A LIVING:

Sooner or later, it happens in every office, factory, shop, store, plant and suite in the nation: Some employee brings in one of those humorous photocopies. Most are poor-quality, having been passed down ninety-six times; the majority is obscene; the grammar and syntax are generally abysmal; but they are brought in anyway, copied yet again and again, and passed along to elicit a laugh. Some actually do so.

The latest one that I've been given is on a slightly higher plane than usual. It is neither badly-printed nor obscene. It is, at least in places, quite funny. And I offer a few choice excerpts herewith:

"The following are actual answers taken from traffic accident reports filed in the state of Arizona. They answer the forms' question: In your own words, describe the specific cause of the accident."

COMING HOME, I DROVE INTO THE
WRONG HOUSE AND COLLIDED WITH
A TREE I DON'T HAVE.

MY CAR WAS LEGALLY PARKED AS IT BACKED INTO THE OTHER VEHICLE.

THE OTHER CAR COLLIDED WITH MINE WITHOUT GIVING WARNING OF ITS INTENTIONS.

AN INVISIBLE CAR CAME OUT OF NOWHERE,
STRUCK MY CAR AND VANISHED.

I COLLIDED WITH A STATIONARY TRUCK GOING THE OTHER WAY.

I TOLD THE POLICE THAT I WAS NOT INJURED, BUT ON REMOVING MY HAT, I FOUND THAT I HAD A FRACTURED SKULL.

A PEDESTRIAN HIT ME AND WENT
UNDER MY CAR.

I WAS SURE THE OLD FELLOW WOULD NEVER
MAKE IT TO THE SIDE OF THE ROAD WHEN
I HIT HIM.

THE GUY WAS ALL OVER THE ROAD;
I HAD TO SWERVE A NUMBER OF
TIMES BEFORE I HIT HIM.

THE PEDESTRIAN HAD NO IDEA WHICH WAY TO RUN. SO I RAN OVER HIM.

I HAD BEEN DRIVING FOR FORTY
YEARS WHEN I FELL ASLEEP AND HAD
AN ACCIDENT.

I SAW THE SLOW-MOVING, SAD-FACED GENTLEMAN AS HE BOUNCED OFF THE HOOD OF MY CAR.

AS I APPROACHED THE INTERSECTION,
A STOP SIGN SUDDENLY APPEARED
WHERE NO STOP SIGN HAD EVER
APPEARED BEFORE.

I WAS THROWN FROM MY CAR, AND WAS LATER FOUND BY STRAY COWS.

FORTUNATELY, I MISSED THE TREE
AND HIT THE OLD LADY INSTEAD.

MAJOR MEDICAL INJURY DEPARTMENT:

Steve Knight, excellent Diplomacy publisher and accomplished musician, recently attempted to end his career as a pianist. Apparently, the ravages of age resulted in his being unable to tell the difference between his thumb and the firewood he was chopping with an axe....

Steve is logically worried, but I have a suspicion that time will resolve the matter favorably. My own accompanist pulled a similar stunt once - she chose a butcher's cleaver instead - and came out of it nicely. And (I didn't mention this in the personal letter I wrote Steve, mainly because I forgot about it) my own pianistic talents were not impeded by a severe finger injury I received in a 1965 auto accident.

But it is worth considering this (and whether this will make Steve feel better or worse is a good question): There are pianists of some significance who have survived worse. Leon Fleisher is back, after nearly twenty years' incapacitation due to a mysterious central nervous system affliction. The superb Swiss pianist Paul Wittgenstein lost an arm to gangrene in the First World War; he compensated by making a career as a one-handed virtuoso, and among the results was the wonderful Ravel Concerto for the Left Hand. A similar happening occurred to a German pianist in World War II, and from that came the Prokofiev Fourth Concerto.

Patience, Steve. Don't rush it, and don't despair.

* * * * *

And speaking of death - oh, we weren't? - one of the more idiotic funds of trivial knowledge I possess is a fascinating list of screwball ways in which a number of classical composers have died. I mean, anybody can have a coronary or get TB, but a few just had to be different:

Alessandro Stradella was murdered by a jealous husband.

Jean-Marie Leclair was murdered by a street mugger.

Jean-Baptiste Lully, conducting an orchestra with the baton of the day (which was solid steel and about five feet long), bashed himself in the foot. Blood poisoning did the rest.

Mieczyslaw Karlowicz ignored the weather reports, and was buried in an avalanche.

Anton von Webern honored his family's request that he not smoke in the house, so he stepped outside; unfortunately, this was occupied Vienna in 1945, and he was shot by a sentry.

Arthur Goring Thomas came to the conclusion that he wasn't really a very good composer, so he jumped in front of the London subway.

Louis-Ferdinand von Hohenzollern was a composer, but he was also a military officer and the heir to the Prussian throne. Leading a cavalry charge at Wagram, he fell from his horse, refused to surrender, and was skewered.

Ernest Chausson went for a bicycle ride one afternoon; on an unfamiliar steep grade, he lost control and ran into a brick wall.

César Franck went for a walk in downtown Paris one day, and was hit by a streetcar.

NOTE: I have it on good authority that none of these facts can do you the least bit of good in 'Trivial Pursuit.'

REFLECTIONS ON THE SECOND COLLAPSE OF MOCTEZUMA'S CAPITAL:

As I write this, they are still picking up the pieces of Mexico City. Those of us who live in earthquake country - California is well-known for predictions of its doom in a major tremor - paid perhaps a bit more attention to the reports of this disaster than did others. (By the same token, I'm far less concerned with hurricane data than, say, a reader in Florida would be.) Furthermore, I was born in San Francisco, which has had the best-known earthquake experience in history. (Note of personal history: My father was named for his father's best friend, a journalist named Charles Ross. Mr. Ross was in San Francisco at the time of the big quake, and was responsible for much of the 'first-person' reporting done at the time. He also wrote several letters to my grandfather describing the disaster in unusual depth; I still have those letters.)

When I was a boy, it was a part of my elementary school curriculum to have earthquake drills. They were held separately from the fire drills that all children have, and consisted in diving under desks, crouching within doorways, and not panicking. Several times during my career, these drills were the real things: San Francisco has earthquakes all the time, and occasionally one will be sharp enough to actually rattle a few dishes or shake a wall. The worst of them I ever experienced in San Francisco registered about 4.6 on the scale, was centered across the Golden Gate in Marin County, and did a certain amount of minor damage over there (a few broken windows, lots of broken china, stucco cracks, etc.). None of the little ones I was in ever hurt anybody.

When I was nine, I loved to Los Angeles. The schools there also had earthquake drills, albeit not very frequently (once or twice per semester), and nobody took the matter very seriously. On coming to San Diego at age 13, I left the drills behind entirely. I do, however, recall that while in Los Angeles I experienced a couple of minor quakes, and since coming to San Diego I've felt a few more. Again, damage - if any - was always minor, and nobody ever got hurt.

Except once.

In 1972 my wife and I went on a short vacation. Wowee; big vacation; we went up to Los Angeles for a few days, to visit friends, do the tourist traps, see a movie or two: The usual stuff on a tiny budget. And, one evening as we sat in a theatre in Westwood, Kathy suddenly leaned over and asked, "Is it me, or is the screen wobbling?" It was not she.

The theatre had one of those ghastly, gaudy 'fake crystal' chandeliers over the auditorium, and when I looked up at it, I noticed an ominous swaying; at about that moment, the tell-tale 'clink' of bits of fake crystal banging into other bits of fake crystal became apparent. The rest of the audience was by now aware that something was under way, and a few people could be seen hurriedly sneaking out the side exits. A few hardy souls were still trying to focus on the film (or else were absolutely petrified), but if they were truly concentrating, they were in for severe eyestrain: The images on the screen were by now truly dancing.

And at that moment, suddenly - it was all over. The movie stabilized, the chandelier quieted down, and after a little mumbling and shuffling, the remaining audience sat back down and returned to the entertainment. I suspect that they were a little distracted from then on, however.

Later, of course, we learned that we had just experienced the peripheral effects of the San Fernando earthquake, centered about forty miles away. Damage was severe closer to the source; about fifty people died, mainly in one wing of a Veterans' Hospital that collapsed. Two men died when a just-finished freeway bridge collapsed and fell on their car; a third died when he drove off the end of the just-broken bridge. Five or six Skid Row types were crushed in the collapse of a fleabag hotel. In the part of town where I had been, nobody was hurt and damage was rather minor (a few windows, a couple of water pipes, and one old landmark bank building badly shaken so that it had to be closed and remodeled). But this hardly prevented us from being scared pretty badly.

About five years later, I was again walking in Westwood with my wife - a different wife this time - and passed that theatre. I know I looked up, felt a twinge of fearful memory, and walked on. But I didn't realize with what force I was walking; Jean suddenly yelped, "Hey, what's the hurry?" and I stopped and said, "Hurry? What hurry?" "Then why," she asked, "Did you suddenly start moving three times as fast?"

The experts are unanimous in telling us that sooner or later, California is doomed to a Really Big One. Predictions range from massive destruction in the limited area of the epicenter, to dire warnings that the entire State west of the Sierra Nevada mountains will break off and sink into the Pacific. Some things we don't know, of course: Are our disaster crews ready? Will modern structural technology minimize damage to newer buildings? What happens if one of our nuclear reactors is damaged?

And one final theory that intrigues us all out here: Seismology is currently experimenting with a "backfire" theory that seems to hold some promise. The idea is to trigger (artificially) occasional minor quakes at major stress points, thus relieving the pressure and preventing major (natural) quakes. The big problem to this point has been the inability to predict with accuracy the points of major stress. But this is one of those developing sciences that is learning more every day, so who knows? Maybe one of these days we'll be safe.

And then, on the other hand . . .

NEW GAME STATUS: There are two games open. Five players signed up, a probable sixth. I venture that the first game will fill and start next issue. the other one - well, we'll soon see.

Have you had enough for this issue?

I have.